AN ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE of GREAT-BRITAIN:

EXTRACTED FROM

THE POPULAR PAMPHLET OF THE

BISHOP OF LANDAFF.

This excellent Publication having juſtly obtained the higheſt public approbation and call, the following Extracts are earneſtly recommended to Perſons in all ſtations of life; being one of the moſt animated, and yet temperate Appeals to the Spirit of Engliſhmen, that can be offered to the Public in the preſent ſituation of affairs.

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AN ADDRESS

TO THE

PEOPLE of GREAT-BRITAIN.

By R. Watson, L.L.D.

LORD BISHOP OF LANDAFF.

For the good of the Community, the following Extracts from the Work at large are preſented to the Public.

The Right Rev. AUTHOR begins his ADDRESS thus:

MY FELLOW COUNTRYMEN,

THE ſentiments which I ſhall, in this Addreſs, take the liberty of ſtating to you, on ſome intereſting points, will I hope meet with your candid attention;—if not from their worth, from the conſideration that they are the ſentiments of *an Independant Man.* I am neither the friend nor enemy of any Party in the State; and am ſo far an impartial man, that, on all public queſtions of importance, I will follow the dictates of my own individual judgment. No favour which I could receive from this, or from any Adminiſtration, would induce me to ſupport meaſures which I diſliked; nor will any neglect I may experience impel me to oppoſe meaſures which I approve.

A new ſyſtem of finance has this year been introduced; and I fairly own it has my approbation as far as it goes. It has given great diſcontent to many; but it has given none to me. I lament, as every man muſt do, the neceſsity of impoſing ſo heavy a burden on the community; and, with a family of eight children, I ſhall feel its preſſure as much as moſt men: buf I am ſo far from cenſuring the Miniſter for having done ſo much, that I ſincerely wiſh he had done a great deal more. In the preſent ſituation of Great-Britain, and of Europe, palliatives are of no uſe—half-meaſures cannot ſave us. Inſtead of calling for a tenth of a man's income, I wiſh the Miniſter had called for a tenth or for ſuch other portion of every man's whole property, as would have enabled him not merely to make a temporary proviſion for the war, but to have paid off in a few years the whole or the greateſt part of the national debt.

A million a year has been wiſely ſet apart for the reduction of the debt; and, had we continued at peace, its operation would have been beneficially felt in a few years; but, in our preſent circumſtances, and with an expectation of the recurrency of war at ſhort periods, it is not one, two, or three millions a-year that can preſerve us from bankruptcy. We had better ſtruggle to effect the extinction of the debt in five years than in fifty, though our exertion during the ſhorter period ſhould be proportionably greater.

A nation is but a collection of individuals united into one body for mutual benefit; and a national debt is a debt belonging to every individual, in proportion to the property he poſſeſſes; and every individual may be juſtly called upon for his quota, towards the liquidation of it. No man, relatively

ſpeaking, will be either richer or poorer by this payment being generally made; for riches and poverty are relative terms; and when all the members of a community are proportionably reduced, the relation between the individuals, as to the *quantum* of each man's property, remaining unaltered, the individuals themſelves will feel no elevation or depreſsion in the ſcale of ſociety. When all the foundations of a great building ſink uniformly, the ſymmetry of the parts is not injured; the preſſure of each member remains as it was—no rupture is made: the building will not be ſo lofty, but it may ſtand on a better bottom.—It does not require an oracle to inform us (though an oracle has ſaid it) that riches have been the ruin of every country:—they baniſh the ſimplicity of manners, they corrupt the morals of a people, and they invite invaders. If we pay the national debt, we may not live quite lo luxurioufly as we have done, but this change will be no detriment either to our virtue as men, or to our ſafety as members of ſociety.

I conſider the property of men united in ſociety, ſo far to belong to the State, that any portion of it may be juſtly called for by the Legiſlature, for the promotion of the common good; and it is then moſt equitably called for, when all individuals poſſeſsing property of any kind, contribute in proportion to their poſſeſsions. This is a principle ſo obvioufly juſt, that it is attended to as much as poſsible in every ſcheme of Finance; and it would be the univerſal rule of taxation, in every country, could the property of individuals be exactly aſcertained. Much objection is made to the obliging men to diſcover the amount of their property; but I have never heard a ſufficient reaſon to ſupport the objection. I can ſee a reaſon why merchants, tradeſmen, money jobbers, who deal in large ſpeculations on credit,

and without an adequate capital, ſhould be unwilling to diſcloſe their property; but I do not ſo clearly ſee what miſchief would ariſe to the community if they were obliged to do it.

The value of every man's landed property is eaſily known; the value of his monied property in the funds is known; and his monied property in mortgages and bonds might as eaſily be known, if any Act of Parliament was paſſed, rendering no mortgages or bond legal which was not regiſtered. The greateſt difficulty would be in aſcertaining the value of the ſtock in trade: but a jury of neighbours co-operating with the probity of merchants and manufacturers, and that regard for character which generally diſtinguiſhes men in buſineſs, would ſettle that point.

I have lately converſed with a variety of men, in different ſtations, and in different parts of the kingdom, and have ſcarcely met with one among the landed gentry, and with none among the manufacturers, tradeſmen, farmers, and artificers of the country, who has not declared that he had much rather pay his portion of the principal of the National Debt, than be harraſſed with the taxes deſtined for the payment of the intereſt of it. This is true patriotiſm, and good ſenſe; and were we in our preſent circumſtances to diſcharge the whole, or the greateſt part of the National Debt, all Europe would admire our magnanimity; and France herſelf would tremble at the idea of ſubjugating ſo high-ſpirited a people.

The Miniſter, I am perſuaded, is too enlightened not to have conſidered this ſubject; and objections may have occurred to him, which have not occurred to me. I have ventured to ſtate it for general conſideration: that it may not be quite new, if we

ſhould at length be compelled to have recourſe to ſuch an expedient. There would be ſome difficulty in aſcertaining every man's property; but where there is a willing mind to remove difficulties, they are ſeldom inſurmountable. The modifications which the Bill for increaſing the Aſſeſſed Taxes has undergone, are numerous, and in general judicious; and are a proof that the moſt perplexing difficulties yield to impartial and deliberate wiſdom.

One modification has not been noticed; at leaſt, I have not ſeen it ſtated in ſo clear a manner as it might be ſtated; and I will mention it, as not undeſerving attention, if the buſineſs ſhould ever be reſumed in another form:—Permanent income ariſes either from the rent of land, or from the intereſt of money, or from an annuity. The Annuitants are very numerous in this kingdom:—Poſſeſſors of entailed eſtates, widows with jointures, the Biſhops and Clergy, the Judges, and poſſeſſors of patent places during life, the Officers of the Army and Navy, and many others under different denominations, ſupport themſelves upon property terminating with their lives. The lives of poſſeſſors of annuities may, taking the old and the young together, be worth twelve years' purchaſe: An Annuitant, then, who has an income of 100l. and no other property, is worth 1200l. ſo that in paying a tenth of this income, he pays an-hundred-twentieth part of his whole property. A perſon poſſeſſed of an income of 100l. ariſing from a property of 2000l. let out at an intereſt of 5l. per cent. in paying a tenth of this income, pays a-two-hundredth part of his property. A perſon poſſeſsing an income of 100l. ariſing from land, in paying a tenth of his income, pays (eſtimating land at thirty years' purchaſe) a-three-hun-

dredth part of his property. Men under theſe different deſcriptions pay equally, though their properties are unequal in the proportion of 6, 10, and 15.

Much objection, alſo, has on all hands been made to the touching of the funds by taxation; but I own that I do not ſee any ſufficient reaſon why property in the funds may not be as juſtly as any other property ſubject to the diſpoſal of the Legiſlature.—I make this obſervation with perfect impartiality; for a conſiderable part of the little property I poſſeſs is in the funds.—*Parliament has pledged the Nation to the payment of the intereſt of the money which has been borrowed, till the principal is paid off; but when the debt is become ſo great, that the rental of the kingdom will ſcarce pay the intereſt of it, I do not ſee any breach of contract, any want of equity, in the Legiſlature of the Country ſaying to the Public Creditor,* "The poſſeſſors of land are giving up a tenth, or a twentieth, part of all they are worth, for the public ſervice;—the poſſeſſors of houſes, and of ſtock in trade, of mortgages and bonds, are doing the ſame thing:—WHAT REASON CAN BE GIVEN WHY YOU SHOULD BE EXEMPTED?" *You plead the faith of Parliament.* —Be it ſo! *Parliament preſerves its faith with you; for if Parliament ſhould with one hand pay you your principal, it may lay hold of it with the other, and make you as liable as other men poſſeſſing money, to pay your proportion; and does it not come to the ſame thing whether your whole principal is paid, and a portion of it taken back again, or whether your principal is diminiſhed by that portion, and you receive the ſtipulated intereſt till the remainder is diſcharged?*

FREDERICK II. in ſpeaking of France, about twenty years ago, obſerved, that there were three things which hindered France from re-aſſuming that

aſcendancy in the affairs of Europe which ſhe had poſſeſſed from the time of HENRY IV.—The enormity of her debt—exhauſted reſources—and taxes multiplied in an exceſsive manner. The two laſt are the offspring of the firſt; but the Monarch's obſervation is applicable to every other nation under the ſame circumſtances, and to ourſelves as well as to others. If we pay our debt by judicious inſtalments, we ſhall neither run the riſk of Government being broken up as it was in France, by the diſcontents of the people, and an inability to go on—nor ſhall we cripple our commerce by the high price of labour and proviſions—nor ſhall we be depopulated by emigrations to America or France; but we ſhall preſerve the importance we poſſeſs in Europe, and renovate the ſtrength and vigour of the body politic.

But I will not detain you longer on this point:—there is another, of great importance, to which I wiſh to turn your attention:

Whatever doubts I formerly entertained, either on the juſtice or neceſsity of commencing this war in which we are engaged, I entertain none on the preſent neceſsity and juſtice of continuing it. Under whatever circumſtances the war was begun, it is now become juſt; ſince the enemy has refuſed to treat, on equitable terms, for the reſtoration of peace. Under whatever circumſtances of expediency or inexpediency the war was commenced, its continuance is now become neceſſary; for what neceſsity can be greater than that which ariſes from the enemy having threatened us with deſtruction as a Nation?

Here I may, probably, be told, that, allowing the war to be juſt, it is ſtill not neceſſary, but perfectly inexpedient. I may have it rung in my ears, that the French are an over-match for us;—that it is better to ſubmit at once to the moſt ignominious terms of peace, than to ſee another BRENNUS weighing out the bullion of the Bank, and inſulting the miſery of the nation with a "Woe to the vanquiſhed." I admit the concluſion of the alternative to be juſt; but I do not admit the truth of the principle from which it is derived—I do not admit that the French are an over-match for us.

I am far enough from affecting knowledge in military matters; but every man knows that men and money are the ſinews of war, and that victory in the field is achieved by the valour of troops and the ſkill of commanders. Now in which of theſe four particulars is France our ſuperior? You will anſwer at once, ſhe is ſuperior in the number of men. The population, I know, of the two countries has been generally eſtimated in the proportion of three to one: but though this ſhould be admitted to have been the true proportion of population, and of the men capable of bearing arms, in the beginning of the war, I think it is not the true proportion at preſent. Both countries have loſt great numbers; but France, inſtead of loſing three times, has, I apprehend, loſt above ten times as many men as we have done; ſo that the proportion of men capable of bearing arms remaining in France, compared with what Great-Britain can furniſh, does not, I am perſuaded, exceed that of two to one. And were there even a bridge over the Channel, France durſt not make an incurſion with half her numbers. She knows how ready her neighbours would be to revenge the injuries they have ſuſtained,—how ready her own citi-

zens would be to regain the bleſsings they have loſt, could they once ſee all her forces occupied in a diſtant country. France, I repeat it, were there even a bridge from Calais to Dover, could not ſend into the field as many as we could oppoſe againſt her.

But, it may be urged, all the men in France are ſoldiers:—No; ſome are left to till the ground, ſome to ſuſtain the languors of her commerce, ſome to periſh in priſon, deploring the miſery of their country. So many, I acknowledge, are become ſoldiers in France, that we muſt, in a great degree, imitate her example. Every man who can be ſpared from the agriculture, the manufactures, and the commerce of the country, muſt become a ſoldier, if we mean to face the enemy in a proper manner—if empire or ſervitude are to be fairly fought for.

As to money, I need not enter into any comparative diſcuſsion on that head. France has no means within herſelf of providing for her armies:—She intends to ſend them into this country, either that ſhe may pay them, as ſhe has done in Italy, by plunder, or, in the true ſpirit of deſpair, cancel her debts, by ſacrificing the perſons of her ſoldiers.

With reſpect to the valour of the French Troops, I have nothing to object. I know it is a favourite opinion with many, that the French are now what their anceſtors were in the time of CÆSAR; "that in the *firſt* onſet they are more than men, but in the *ſecond* leſs than women." But it appears to me, I muſt confeſs, that in this war the French have ſuſtained with courage *many onſets*;—praiſe is due to gallantry even of an enemy. But if I were aſked, whether an equal number of Engliſhmen would beat theſe Conquerors of Italy? I would anſwer, as an Engliſh Am-

baſſador anſwered a King of Pruſsia, when at a review of his forces, he aſked the Ambaſſador, "whether an equal number of Engliſhmen could beat his Pruſsians?" "I cannot tell (replied the Ambaſſador) whether an equal number would beat them; but I am certain half the number would try."—I have the ſirmeſt conſidence, that fifty thouſand Engliſhmen, fighting for their Wives and Children, for their Liberty and Property, as Individuals, for the Independence and Conſtitution of their Country, would without heſitation, attack an hundred thouſand Frenchmen.

As to the relative ſkill of the Commanders, it would ill become me to give any opinion upon that point. If I were to admit that the French Generals are not inferior to our own in martial ability, yet, in the local knowledge of the Country, and the correctneſs and fidelity of the information they will receive, ours will certainly have the advantage.

But if the French are not our ſuperiors, either in men or money, in the valour of their ſoldiers, or the ſkill of their Commanders, what have we to apprehend, ſhould we be forced to fight them on our own ground? A thouſand evils, no doubt, attend a Country becoming the ſeat of War, to which we are ſtrangers, and to which through the good providence of God, and the energy of our Navy, we ſhall long, I truſt, continue ſtrangers. But ſhould the matter happen otherwiſe—ſhould the Enemy, by an untoward accident, land their Forces, I ſee no reaſon why we ſhould deſpair of our Country, if we are only faithful to ourſelves: if, forgetting all Party animoſity, we ſtand collected as one man againſt them.

Many honeſt men, I am ſenſible, have been alarmed into a belief, that, were the French to invade this

country, they would be joined by great numbers of diſcontented men. This is not my opinion. That they would be joined by a few of the worſt men in the country—by thieves and robbers, and outcaſts of ſociety, is probable enough; but that any individual, poſſeſsing either property or character—that any reſpectable body of men, would ſo far indulge their diſcontents, as to ruin their country and themſelves in gratifying their reſentment, is what nothing but experience can convince me of.

The Right Reverend Author, after reviewing, in a very conciliatory ſtile, the ſtate of Parties in Great Britain, and offering ſome excellent obſervations on the conduct of France, next turns his attention to attacks which have been made on Religion by thoſe who are anxious, through its ſides, to wound the State.

There ſtill remains another ſubject which I am moſt anxious to recommend to your ſerious conſideration—the attempts of bad men to rob you of your Religion.

It is now ſomewhat more than ſeventy years ſince certain men, who eſteemed themſelves Philoſophers, and who, unqueſtionably, were men of talents, began, in different parts of the Continent, but eſpecially in France and Germany, to attack the Chriſtian Religion. The deſign has been carried on by them and others, under various denominations, from that time to the preſent hour. In order to accompliſh their end, they have publiſhed an infinity of books, ſome of them diſtinguiſhed by wit and ridicule, unbecoming the vaſt importance of the ſubject, and all ſtuffed with falſe quotations, and ignorant or deſigned miſrepreſentations of Scripture, or filled with objections againſt human corruptions of faith, and for which Chriſtianity cannot be accountable.

A ſimilar attempt, I have reaſon to believe, has for ſome years been carrying on amongſt ourſelves, and by the ſame means. Irreligious pamphlets have been circulated with great induſtry, ſold at a ſmall price, or given away to the loweſt of the people, in every great town in the kingdom. The profane ſtile of theſe pamphlets is ſuited to the taſte of the wicked, and the confident aſſertions which they contain are well calculated to impoſe on the underſtanding of the unlearned; and it is among the wicked and the ignorant that the Enemies of Religion and Government are endeavouring to propagate their tenets.

It is here ſuppoſed that the enemies of Religion are alſo the enemies of Government; but this muſt be underſtood with ſome reſtriction. There are, it may be ſaid, many Deiſts in this country, who are ſenſible of the advantages of a regular Government, and who would be as unwilling as the moſt orthodox believers in the kingdom, that our own ſhould be overturned—this may be true—but it is true alſo, that they who wiſh to overthrow the Government, are not only, generally ſpeaking, unbelievers themſelves, but they found their hopes of ſucceſs in the infidelity of the Common People. They are ſenſible that no Government can long ſubſiſt, if the bulk of the people have no reverence for a Supreme Being, no fear of perjury, no apprehenſion of futurity, no check from Conſcience; and foreſeeing the rapine, deva-ſtation, and bloodſhed, which uſually attend the laſt convulſions of a State ſtruggling for its political exiſtence, they wiſh to prepare proper actors for this dreadful cataſtrophe, by brutalizing mankind; for it is by Religion more than any other principle of human nature, that men are diſtinguiſhed from brutes.

The concluſion of this Addreſs is too manly and bold to be omitted.

I am not altogether inſenſible of the danger I may have incurred (ſhould matters come to the extremity) by thus publicly addreſsing my Countrymen. I might have concealed my ſentiments, and waited in retirement, till the ſtruggle had been over and the iſſue known: but I diſdain ſafety, accompanied with diſhonour. When Hannibal is at the gates, who but a poltroon would liſten to the timid counſels of neutrality, or attempt to ſcreen himſelf from the calamity coming on his country, by ſkulking as a vagabond amidſt the mountains of Wales or of Weſtmoreland? I am ready, and I am perſuaded that I entertain a juſt confidence in ſaying, that hundreds of thouſands of loyal and honeſt men are as ready as I am, to hazard every thing in defence of the country.

I pray God to influence the hearts of both ſides to good-will, moderation, and peace: to grant to our enemy grace to return to a due ſenſe of piety, and a belief in uncorrupted Chriſtianity; and to impreſs our own minds with a ſerious ſenſe of the neceſsity of ſo repenting of our ſins, and ſo reforming our lives, as to enable us to hope for his protection againſt all enemies, foreign and domeſtic.